

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.(CURRENTLY AMENDED) A stitch bonded facing fabric comprising:

a first layer of hydrophobic felt;

a second layer of hydrophilic felt being adjacent to the first layer so as to define a felt web having an upper surface defined by an upper side of the first layer and a lower surface defined by a lower side of the second layer; and

a plurality of stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending through the felt web with yarn segments extending across both the upper and lower surfaces of the felt web such that the yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface cooperate to form a top yarn face above the felt web upper surface and the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface cooperate to form a bottom yarn face below the felt web lower surface;

wherein each yarn face is effectively continuous such that the corresponding web surface is not generally exposed at the associated yarn face.

2.(Original) The stitch bonded fabric of claim 1 further comprising a scrim layer interposed between one of the surfaces of the felt web and the yarn segments extending thereacross.

3.(Original) The facing fabric of claim 1 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface form underlaps.

4.(Original) The facing fabric of claim 3 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface form overlaps.

5.(Original) The facing fabric of claim 1 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface form overlaps.

6.(Original) The facing fabric of claim 1 wherein the yarns are stitched in a flat stitch construction across the felt web upper surface.

7.(Original) The facing fabric of claim 1 wherein the yarns are stitched in a loop knit construction across the felt web upper surface to define a plurality of yarn loops in the top yarn face.

8.(Original) The facing fabric of claim 1 wherein the yarns are hydrophobic.

9.(Original) The facing fabric of claim 1 wherein the yarns are hydrophilic.

10.(Original) The facing fabric of claim 1 wherein the yarns are continuous filaments.

11.(CURRENTLY AMENDED) The facing fabric of claim 1 wherein the yarns of each yarn face are not embedded into the associated surface of the web spun yarn.

12.(CURRENTLY AMENDED) A stitch bonded facing fabric comprising:

a felt web having a hydrophobic upper aspect extending from an upper surface of the web and a hydrophilic lower aspect extending from a lower surface of the web; and

a plurality of stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending through the felt web with yarn segments extending across both the upper and lower surfaces of the felt web such that the yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface cooperate to form a top yarn face above the felt web upper surface and the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface cooperate to form a bottom yarn face below the felt web lower surface;

wherein each yarn face is effectively continuous such that the corresponding web surface is not generally exposed at the associated yarn face.

13.(ORIGINAL) The stitch bonded fabric of claim 12 further comprising a scrim layer interposed between one of the surfaces of the felt web and the yarn segments extending thereacross.

14.(ORIGINAL) The facing fabric of claim 12 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface form underlaps.

15.(ORIGINAL) The facing fabric of claim 14 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface form overlaps.

16.(ORIGINAL) The facing fabric of claim 12 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface form overlaps.

17.(ORIGINAL) The facing fabric of claim 12 wherein the yarns are stitched in a flat stitch construction across the felt web upper surface.

18.(ORIGINAL) The facing fabric of claim 12 wherein the yarns are stitched in a loop knit construction across the felt web upper surface to define a plurality of yarn loops in the fabric top.

19.(ORIGINAL) The facing fabric of claim 12 wherein the yarns are hydrophobic.

20.(ORIGINAL) The facing fabric of claim 12 wherein the yarns are hydrophilic.

21.(ORIGINAL) The facing fabric of claim 12 wherein the yarns are continuous filaments.

22.(CURRENTLY AMENDED) The facing fabric of claim 12 wherein the yarns of each yarn face are not embedded into the associated surface of the web spun yarn.

23.(CURRENTLY AMENDED) A fluid-retaining fabric comprising:

a stitch bonded facing fabric having a first layer of hydrophobic felt, a second layer of hydrophilic felt being adjacent to the first layer so as to define a felt web having an upper surface defined by an upper side of the first layer and a lower surface defined by a lower side of the second layer, and a plurality of stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending through the felt web with yarn segments extending across both the upper and lower surfaces of the felt web such that the yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface cooperate to form a top yarn face above the felt web upper surface and the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface cooperate to form a bottom yarn face below the felt web lower surface;

wherein each yarn face is effectively continuous such that the corresponding web surface is not generally exposed at the associated yarn face; and

a barrier layer attached to the bottom yarn face.

24.(ORIGINAL) The fluid-retaining fabric of claim 23 further comprising adhesive attaching the barrier layer to the bottom yarn face.

25.(ORIGINAL) The fluid-retaining fabric of claim 23 wherein the first and second felt layers are needle punched into a single felt web.

26.(ORIGINAL) The fluid-retaining fabric of claim 23 wherein the barrier layer includes a fluid barrier ply and a fabric ply.

27.(ORIGINAL) The fluid-retaining fabric of claim 26 wherein the barrier ply is attached to the bottom yarn face.

28.(ORIGINAL) The fluid-retaining fabric of claim 23 wherein the barrier layer includes a fluid barrier ply.

29.(ORIGINAL) The fluid-retaining fabric of claim 23 further comprising edge stitching attaching the barrier layer to the bottom yarn face.

30.(NEW - CURRENTLY AMENDED) A stitch bonded facing fabric comprising:
a felt web having an upper surface and a lower surface; and
a plurality of stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending through the felt web with yarn
segments extending across both the upper and lower surfaces of the felt web such that the
yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface cooperate to form a top yarn face

above the felt web upper surface and the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface cooperate to form a bottom yarn face below the felt web lower surface;

wherein each yarn face is effectively continuous such that the corresponding web surface is not generally exposed at the associated yarn face.

31.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 30 further comprising a scrim layer interposed between one of the surfaces of the felt web and the yarn segments extending thereacross.

32.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 30 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface form underlaps.

33.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 32 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface form overlaps.

34.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 30 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface form overlaps.

35.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 30 wherein the yarns are stitched in a flat stitch construction across the felt web upper surface.

36.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 30 wherein the yarns are stitched in a loop knit construction across the felt web upper surface to define a plurality of yarn loops in the fabric top.

37.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 30, the felt web including first and second felt layers being adjacent to one another to define the felt web, the upper surface of the web being defined by an upper side of the first felt layer, the lower surface of the web being defined by a lower side of the second felt layer, the stitch bonded yarns extending through both felt layers.

38.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 30 wherein the yarns are hydrophilic.

39.(NEW - CURRENTLY AMENDED) An incontinent pad comprising:

a stitch bonded facing fabric having a felt web having an upper surface and a lower surface and a plurality of stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending through the felt web with yarn segments extending across both the upper and lower surfaces of the felt web such that the yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface cooperate to form a top yarn face above the felt web upper surface and the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface cooperate to form a bottom yarn face below the felt web lower surface;

wherein each yarn face is effectively continuous such that the corresponding web surface is not generally exposed at the associated yarn face; and

a barrier layer joined to the facing fabric so as to confront the bottom yarn face of the facing fabric.

40.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 39 further comprising adhesive attaching the barrier layer to the bottom yarn face.

41.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 39 further comprising edge stitching attaching the barrier layer to the bottom yarn face.

42.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 39 wherein the barrier layer includes a fluid barrier ply and a fabric ply.

43.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 39, the felt web of the stitch bonded facing fabric including first and second felt layers being adjacent to one another to define the felt web, the upper surface of the web being defined by an upper side of the first felt layer, the lower surface of the web being defined by a lower side of the second felt layer, the stitch bonded yarns extending through both felt layers.

44.(NEW) The incontinent pad stitch of claim 39 further comprising a scrim layer in the stitch bonded facing fabric and being interposed between one of the surfaces of the felt web and the yarn segments extending thereacross.

45.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 44, the scrim layer being interposed between the felt web lower surface and the yarn segments extending thereacross.

46.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 39 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface of the stitch bonded facing fabric form underlaps.

47.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 39 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface of the stitch bonded facing fabric form overlaps.

48.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 39 wherein the yarns of the stitch bonded facing fabric are stitched in a flat stitch construction across the felt web upper surface.

49.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 39 wherein the yarns of the stitch bonded facing fabric are stitched in a loop knit construction across the felt web upper surface to define a plurality of yarn loops in the fabric top.

50.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 39 wherein the yarns of the stitch bonded facing fabric are hydrophobic.

51.(NEW - CURRENTLY AMENDED) A fluid retaining fabric comprising:

a felt web having an upper surface and a lower surface, the felt being adapted to retain fluid therein; and

a plurality of stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending through the felt web with yarn segments extending across both the upper and lower surfaces of the felt web such that the yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface cooperate to form a top yarn face above the felt web upper surface and the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface cooperate to form a bottom yarn face below the felt web lower surface, the stitch bonding yarns being hydrophobic whereby to assist in wicking fluid into the felt web;

wherein each yarn face is effectively continuous such that the corresponding web surface is not generally exposed at the associated yarn face.

52.(NEW) The fluid retaining fabric of claim 51 further comprising a scrim layer interposed between one of the surfaces of the felt web and the yarn segments extending thereacross.

53.(NEW) The fluid retaining fabric of claim 51 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web upper surface form underlaps.

54.(NEW) The fluid retaining fabric of claim 51 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web lower surface form overlaps.

55.(NEW) The fluid retaining fabric of claim 51 wherein the yarns are stitched in a flat stitch construction across the felt web upper surface.

56.(NEW) The fluid retaining fabric of claim 51 wherein the yarns are stitched in a loop knit construction across the felt web upper surface to define a plurality of yarn loops in the fabric top.

57.(NEW) The fluid retaining fabric of claim 51 wherein the yarns are continuous filaments.

58.(NEW - CURRENTLY AMENDED) A stitch bonded facing fabric comprising:
a first layer of felt having hydrophobic properties and further having an outer surface; and

a plurality of stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending through the first layer of felt with yarn segments extending across the outer surface of the layer of felt, such that the yarn segments extending across the felt layer outer surface cooperate to form a yarn face above the felt layer outer surface;

wherein the yarn face is effectively continuous such that the outer surface of the layer of felt is not generally exposed at the yarn face.

59.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 58 further comprising a second layer of felt adjacent the first layer and having the stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending therethrough.

60.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 58 further comprising a scrim layer interposed between the felt layer outer surface and the yarn segments extending thereacross.

61.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 58 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web outer surface form underlaps.

62.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 58 wherein the yarns are stitched in a flat stitch construction across the felt web outer surface.

63.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 58 wherein the yarns are stitched in a loop knit construction across the felt web outer surface to define a plurality of yarn loops.

64.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 58 wherein the yarns are hydrophobic.

65.(NEW - CURRENTLY AMENDED) A stitch bonded facing fabric comprising:

a first layer of felt having hydrophilic properties and further having an outer surface;

and

a plurality of stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending through the first layer of felt with yarn segments extending across the outer surface of the layer of felt, such that the yarn segments extending across the felt layer outer surface cooperate to form a yarn face above the felt layer outer surface;

wherein the yarn face is effectively continuous such that the outer surface of the layer of felt is not generally exposed at the yarn face.

66.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 65 further comprising a second layer of felt adjacent the first layer and having the stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending therethrough.

67.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 65 further comprising a scrim layer interposed between the felt layer outer surface and the yarn segments extending thereacross.

68.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 65 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web outer surface form overlaps.

69.(NEW) The stitch bonded facing fabric of claim 65 wherein the yarns are hydrophobic.

70.(NEW - CURRENTLY AMENDED) An incontinent pad comprising:

a facing fabric including a first layer of felt having hydrophobic properties and further having an outer surface, and a plurality of stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending though the first layer of felt with yarn segments extending across the outer surface of the layer of felt, such that the yarn segments extending across the felt layer outer surface cooperate to form a yarn face above the felt layer outer surface;

wherein the yarn face is effectively continuous such that the outer surface of the felt layer is not generally exposed at the yarn face; and

a barrier layer joined to the facing fabric.

71.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 70, the facing fabric further including a second layer of felt adjacent the first layer and having the stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending therethrough.

72.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 70 further comprising adhesive attaching the barrier layer to the facing fabric.

73.(NEW) The fluid-retaining fabric of claim 70 further comprising edge stitching attaching the barrier layer to the facing fabric.

74.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 70 wherein the barrier layer includes a fluid barrier ply and a fabric ply.

75.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 70 further comprising a scrim layer in the facing fabric and being interposed between the felt web outer layer and the yarn segments extending thereacross.

76.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 70 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web outer surface of the facing fabric form underlaps.

77.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 70 wherein the yarns of the facing fabric are stitched in a flat stitch construction across the felt web outer surface.

78.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 70 wherein the yarns of the facing fabric are stitched in a loop knit construction across the felt web outer surface to define a plurality of yarn loops.

79.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 70 wherein the yarns of the facing fabric are hydrophobic.

80.(NEW - CURRENTLY AMENDED) An incontinent pad comprising:

a facing fabric including a first layer of felt having hydrophilic properties and further having an outer surface, and a plurality of stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending through the first layer of felt with yarn segments extending across the outer surface of the layer of felt, such that the yarn segments extending across the felt layer outer surface cooperate to form a yarn face above the felt layer outer surface;

wherein each yarn face is effectively continuous such that the outer surface of the layer of felt is not generally exposed at the yarn face; and

a barrier layer joined to the facing fabric.

81.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 80, the facing fabric further including a second layer of felt adjacent the first layer and having the stitch bonding yarns repeatedly extending therethrough.

82.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 80 further comprising adhesive attaching the barrier layer to the facing fabric.

Appl. No. 09/558,329
Amdt. dated April 29, 2005

83.(NEW) The fluid-retaining fabric of claim 80 further comprising edge stitching attaching the barrier layer to the facing fabric.

84.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 80 wherein the barrier layer includes a fluid barrier ply and a fabric ply.

85.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 80 further comprising a scrim layer in the facing fabric and being interposed between the felt web outer layer and the yarn segments extending thereacross.

86.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 80 wherein the yarn segments extending across the felt web outer surface of the facing fabric form overlaps.

87.(NEW) The incontinent pad of claim 80 wherein the yarns of the facing fabric are hydrophobic.